Marshall Memo 649

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
August 22, 2016

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Quotes of the Week

"If there is one theme that has emerged from the fractious state of our political and civic lives in 2016, it is not how divided we are, but rather how deeply and stubbornly obtuse we are about one another's lives."

Robert Pondiscio in "J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy* Is Required Reading for Education Reformers" in *Education Gadfly*, August 17, 2016 (Vol. 16, #33), http://bit.ly/2bsEGhi

"Judgment is hard to define. It is a fusion of your thinking, feelings, experience, imagination, and character."

Joseph Badaracco (see item #1)

"I wouldn't go ahead with something just because my brain told me it was the right thing to do. I also had to feel it. If I didn't, I had to get my brain and my gut into harmony."

An experienced executive (quoted in item #1)

"In fact, we know from looking at the comparisons between classes of 25-30 to 15-20, in smaller classes, teachers talk more. There is less feedback. There is less group interaction… If I'm given trillions to reduce class sizes and that's the only choice, I'll take it. But if I'm given trillions, I'd rather spend the money on developing teacher expertise…"

John Hattie quoted in "Dr. John Hattie: Assessment Should Measure Teachers' Impact" by Roger Riddell, July 21, 2016, *Education Drive*, http://bit.ly/2acbAp1

"So that's the question I'd ask: Any time a teacher does a test, what did they learn about their impact? Who did they have their impact with? [H]ow they have to change for groups of kids and individual kids. If that's the purpose of assessment, it's very powerful."

John Hattie (*ibid*.)

1. Five Considerations When Making Ethical Decisions

"Judgment is hard to define," says Joseph Badaracco (an ethics professor at Harvard Business School) in this *Harvard Business Review* article. "It is a fusion of your thinking, feelings, experience, imagination, and character." Good judgment is crucial when leaders are called upon to make decisions in situations where information is incomplete, boundaries are unclear, and colleagues disagree. "In gray areas, your job isn't *finding* solutions," says Badaracco; "it's *creating* them, relying on your judgment." At such moments, he advises answering these questions one by one:

• *What are the net, net consequences of all your options?* This is not just about a cost-benefit analysis, says Badaracco, nor is it going with your gut. Truly difficult problems "require you to think more broadly, deeply, concretely, imaginatively, and objectively about the full impact of your choices… You might sketch out a rough decision tree, listing all potential moves and all probable outcomes, or designate certain people to act as devil's advocates to find holes in your thinking and prevent you from rushing to conclusions or succumbing to groupthink."

• *What are your core obligations?* These are your duties "to safeguard and respect the lives, rights, and dignity of our fellow men and women," says Badaracco, and you do this "by relying on what philosophers call your 'moral imagination.' That involves stepping out of your comfort zone, recognizing your biases and blind spots, and putting yourself in the shoes of all key stakeholders, especially the most vulnerable ones. How would you feel in their place?"

• *What will work in the world as it is?* Machiavelli may need to be your guide because the world is often "unpredictable, difficult, and shaped by self-interest," says Badaracco. "Sound plans can turn out badly, and bad plans sometimes work… You must also ready yourself to be agile and even opportunistic – maneuvering around any roadblocks or surprises – and, when the situation calls for it, to play hardball, asserting your authority and reminding others who is the boss."

• *Who are we?* Humans are by nature social animals, says Badaracco, so you need to "step back and think about your decision in terms of relationships, values, and norms. What really matters to your team, company, culture? How can you act in a way that reflects and expresses those belief systems? If they conflict, which should take precedence?"

• *What can I live with?* An experienced leader said to Badaracco, "I wouldn't go ahead with something just because my brain told me it was the right thing to do. I also had to feel it. If I didn't, I had to get my brain and my gut into harmony." Badaracco's advice: "End your

conversations with others, close the door, mute the electronics, and stop to reflect. Imagine yourself explaining your decision to a close friend or a mentor – someone you trust and respect deeply. Would you feel comfortable? How would that person react?" He also advises putting the decision and the rationale in writing. "Writing forces clearer thinking and serves as a form of personal commitment."

"How to Tackle Your Toughest Decisions" by Joseph Badaracco in *Harvard Business Review*, September 2016 (Vol. 94, #9, p. 104-107),
https://hbr.org/2016/09/how-to-tackle-your-toughest-decisions

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2. The Link Between Principals' Evaluations and Student Achievement

In this working paper from Mathematica Policy Research, Moira McCullough, Stephen Lipscomb, Hanley Chiang, and Brian Gill report on their comparison of the performance evaluations of 305 Pennsylvania principals with their students' achievement gains. Data on principals' evaluations came from a no-stakes pilot of the Pennsylvania Framework for Leadership, an instrument with 20 performance indicators in four domains (Strategic/Cultural Leadership, Systems Leadership, Leadership for Learning, and Professional and Community Leadership). Data on student achievement came from a value-added analysis of state test scores in each principal's school, calculating student gains using an elaborate formula that separated the principal's contributions from factors beyond the principal's control – for example, neighborhood conditions and personnel decisions made by previous principals that were difficult to alter in the short run.

The researchers found a "relatively small" but statistically significant positive relationship between principals' evaluation scores and their students' achievement gains (0.17 was the correlation coefficient between principals' overall scores and value-added estimates of their students' math achievement). The correlation was stronger in rubric areas Systems Leadership and Professional/Community Leadership; stronger with students' math compared with ELA achievement; and stronger with principals who had been leading their schools for three or more years.

The researchers acknowledge that their study didn't find a robust link between principals' evaluations and student achievement, but nonetheless argue that "including a measure of professional practice similar in content and structure to the Framework for Leadership is a viable option for states and districts that seek to employ a multiple measures approach to evaluating principals."

[Why was the link between principals' evaluation scores and student achievement so weak, when previous research has shown that principals are the second-most powerful factor in student learning (only teaching is more important)? Some possible explanations:

- The scores superintendents gave principals on the Framework for Leadership rubric might not have captured important nuances in each principal's work, given the common tendency of district leaders (or their designees) to spend very little time closely supervising school leaders.

- The Framework for Leadership rubric has rather general indicators and might not capture in sufficient detail the key school-based factors that drive student achievement.
- The Framework doesn't give more weight to factors that are most strongly correlated with student achievement, so principals' most important contributions might not have been given proportionate emphasis.
- Value-added analysis of student achievement has been notoriously imprecise in capturing student learning gains and might not be picking up what was actually happening in each of these 504 schools.
- Other factors might have been operating in the schools – factors that couldn't be picked up by a small team of researchers unable to make close observations of the dynamics in such a large number of schools.

Until there's more clarity on these issues, it seems unwise to use principals' scores on the Pennsylvania Framework for Leadership, or similar rubrics, to draw high-stakes conclusions about principals' impact on student learning. K.M.]

"Do Principals' Professional Practice Ratings Reflect Their Contributions to Student Achievement? Evidence from Pennsylvania's Framework for Leadership" by Moira McCullough, Stephen Lipscomb, Hanley Chiang, and Brian Gill, Mathematica Policy Research, June 2016, http://bit.ly/2afqHxb; The Pennsylvania Framework for Leadership is available at https://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/Principal_Rubric.pdf; McCullough can be reached at mmccullough@mathematica-mpr.com.

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3. Priming the Pump to Improve the Questions Students Ask

In this article in *Faculty Focus*, Steve Snyder (Grand View University) describes his efforts to improve the quality and quantity of questions students asked in his humanities courses. Why weren't students asking more questions? he wondered. Was it shyness? Lack of motivation? Not being prepared? He decided a more likely explanation was that students were simply less experienced than professors at interrogating ideas. "So the challenge for me," he says, "was to nudge them from novices to something closer to advanced beginners."

To stretch students' question-asking skills, Snyder developed a set of prompts, paralleling Bloom's taxonomy of learning, and each day asked students to choose the best questions on the primary texts they were reading (either as homework or in the first ten minutes of class).

Level One: Contextuals, Definitions, Clarifications, and Analyzers:

- How was X (an event/text/work) shaped by its time?
- Where did it originate and why?
- Who was its originator and what was he or she like?
- How do you define this word/term/idea/etc.?
- What does this passage/concept/etc. mean?
- What would be a specific, concrete example?
- What parts or features make up the whole of X and what does each part do?

- How do the parts contribute to the whole?
- How is this idea/concept organized and why is it organized that way?

Level Two: Comparatives, Causals, and Evaluatives:

- How is X the same as that? How is it different? What is the opposite of X?
- How are these more or less similar?
- What factors caused X to happen?
- Which of these factors is sufficient? Which factors are contributing or probable?
- On what grounds can we eliminate possible causes or explanations?
- What are the most important features of X?
- Why do you like or dislike X (or agree or disagree)?
- How strong is the case that X is correct?
- What criteria are best for judging X?
- What is the best order of priority for these things and why?
- What is the strongest argument against X?

Level Three: Counterfactuals, Extenders, Synthesizers:

- How would X change if this happened?
- How would things be different if X had not happened?
- How would things be different if X happened to a greater (or lesser) degree?
- How can we apply X to this set of circumstances?
- What can we predict if X is correct?
- What ideas should be added to X?
- What might happen if you added this to X?

Snyder urged students to avoid questions with yes/no answers, specify text page numbers where their questions arose, and ask about areas they struggled with or that aroused their curiosity. He also told students to choose questions on different levels of the hierarchy and identify the kind of thinking required to formulate an answer. The goal was more-active involvement and improving their understanding of the subject matter and its relationship to other subjects.

"Even with some pump-priming," says Snyder, "many of the questions students generate will be non-starters and that's okay. Sometimes this happens because students are simply going through the motions of the exercise, but more often it's because they aren't experts and can't always recognize non-starter questions. Indeed, it's difficult for students to think like disciplinary experts, and it's tempting for us to jump in and speed the process along. I have found that if I can be patient and remain quiet, students will self-identify dead-end questions more quickly than I expect. The discovery of dead ends is in itself a powerful learning experience, one we can short-circuit in our haste. More to the point, we have to work through the bad questions to find the wonderful, thought-provoking questions."

"A Practical Approach for Increasing Students' In-Class Questions" by Steve Snyder in *Faculty Focus*, July 13, 2016, http://bit.ly/2bJiDVe; Snyder can be reached at ssnyder@grandview.edu.

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4. The Goldilocks Level of Teacher Support During Inquiry Learning

"Psychologists and educational scientists seem to converge on the notion that student involvement is key to successful learning," say Dutch researchers Ard Lazonder (University of Twente) and Ruth Harmsen (University of Groningen) in this article in *Review of Educational Research*. "Despite their appealing nature, controversy remains as to whether and when inquiry-based methods promote student learning." Lazonder and Harmsen did a meta-analysis of 72 studies to try to bring some clarity to the issue. Their research question: how much teacher guidance – and what type of guidance – is desirable as students of different ages engage in inquiry learning?

Their conclusion: Teacher guidance is essential to students' success during inquiry learning and is also important to learning outcomes – and this is true for students of all ages. The type of teacher guidance, and how much, depends on the situation. Lazonder and Harmsen list some possibilities, ranging from the least to the most directive:

- Process constraints – The teacher organizes the inquiry into a manageable series of subtasks but provides minimal guidance on how to proceed.
- Status overviews – The teacher summarizes how students are doing and students decide whether to use the teacher's information.
- Prompts – The teacher (or the materials or software) will remind students to perform a particular action they might not carry out on their own.
- Heuristics – These remind students to perform an action and point out possible ways to perform it. Heuristics might be given at the outset or during the inquiry process.
- Scaffolds – The teacher explains, structures, or takes over the more-demanding parts of an inquiry when students are unsure or don't remember what to do. Ideally scaffolding is gradually removed so students can perform independently.
- Explanations – The teacher specifies exactly how to perform an action when students don't know what to do. Explanations can be given before the inquiry begins or during the inquiry on a just-in-time basis.

The big question for teachers is how much support students should receive. "Adequate guidance is not the same as highly specific guidance," say Lazonder and Harmsen. "Too much guidance inevitably challenges the inherent nature of the inquiry process. And the present findings indicate that less-specific forms of guidance lead to comparable learning activities and outcomes as more-specific guidance. This enables teachers to create guided learning environments that give learners enough freedom to examine a topic or perform a task on their own."

"Meta-Analysis of Inquiry-Based Learning: Effects of Guidance" by Ard Lazonder and Ruth Harmsen in *Review of Educational Research*, September 2016 (Vol. 86, #3, p. 681-718), available for purchase at http://rer.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/02/03/0034654315627366; the authors can be reached at a.w.lazonder@utwente.nl and r.harmsen@rug.nl.

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5. Students Who Are Afraid They Won't Be Perfect

In this *Inside Higher Ed* article, Joseph Holtgreive (Northwestern University) observes that many of his high-achieving students did well in high school with relatively little effort, but find things more difficult in college. Some of these students panic when they get a low grade on a midterm and want to drop the course.

The problem, says Holtgreive, is that they're focusing on their GPA, the way they did in high school. "Yet while these students think they're keeping their eyes on the ball," he says, "they are actually just staring at the scoreboard. For students who found high school relatively easy, staring at the measurement of their performance is affirming. Even more affirming is the gap between their outcomes, in the form of grades, and their input, in the form of effort. The wider the gap, the smarter they feel…" But when they do less well on challenging courses in college and have to work harder, they feel dumb.

The solution to this bind, says Holtgreive, is for students to redirect their attention from the scoreboard to the game of learning: "Focusing on learning creates a direct relationship between input and outcome: the more effort they invest, the greater the opportunity to learn… When the goal is to be smart, the formula is reduced to maximizing grades while minimizing effort. When the goal is to learn, the formula becomes about maximizing learning while optimizing effort. The more effective their effort, the more they can learn." Better grades are a natural byproduct, rather than the end goal.

Too much focus on grades reinforces what Carol Dweck calls a fixed mindset. "If students believe that how they perform at one moment in time exposes the limits of their potential rather than serving merely as a snapshot of where they are in the process of growing their abilities," says Holtgreive, "feelings of struggle and uncertainty become threatening rather than an opportunity to grow." The anxiety can lead students to tighten up and self-sabotage.

Holtgreive describes how he counseled a young engineering student who loved her Russian literature class but wanted to drop it because of a bad midterm grade. A look of true excitement crossed her face "when it dawned on her that she got to decide how she would show up for her learning. There is no shame in going all in, and just maybe the rewards will outweigh the risks."

"Too Smart to Fail?" by Joseph Holtgreive in *Inside Higher Ed*, August 16, 2016, http://bit.ly/2bfPcYY

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6. Misconceptions About Reading Difficulty

In this *Reading Rockets* article, literacy guru Tim Shanahan weighs in on the question of how much students should be stretched beyond "just right" texts. "Research has not been kind to the idea of mechanical 'instructional level' criteria like 90-95% accuracy," he says. "Language learning doesn't work that way." He proceeds to puncture some beliefs that haven't stood up to new evidence:

• *Misconception #1: Easier texts are more motivating*. Shanahan says he believed this until quite recently, but the research has changed his mind. The idea that students "can miss

some specific number of words, but only that number and no more, just hasn't panned out," he says… "[I[n other words, our relatively easy book matches may be holding kids back, preventing them from exposure to more challenging features of language and meaning."

• *Misconception #2: All texts need to be at an instructional level*. "Text level should vary," says Shanahan; "kids should move across a range of texts from easy to difficult. In the teaching of most skilled activities (e.g., foreign language, dancing, bicycle racing), the idea is not to protect the learners from harder applications of those skills, but to vary the routines between relatively easy challenges and those that scare and potentially embarrass the learner."

• *Misconception #3: Text level is the only feature of the learning situation that can be varied*. "Not only should texts vary in difficulty," says Shanahan, "but the amount of help, guidance, explanation, and scaffolding ought to vary, too… When kids are in easy texts, the training wheels can be taken off. When they are in harder texts, as a teacher I need to be prepared to offer greater guidance and support. That means easier texts when reading with 30 kids, and harder texts – certainly beyond the normally prescribed levels – when I'm sitting closely with 6-8 kids and can monitor more closely and intervene more easily."

• *Misconception #4: More-challenging texts will disrupt kids' development of decoding skills*. In grades K-1, beginning readers need relatively easy texts that are clearly decodable and have consistent spelling patterns. But by second grade, they're ready for a greater range of text difficulty. "No one, however, is saying just throw kids into hard text and hope they make it," says Shanahan. The key factors are variety of high-quality, engaging texts and lots of appropriate support.

"Further Explanation of Teaching Students with Challenging Text" by Tim Shanahan in *Reading Rockets*, June 27, 2016, http://bit.ly/2b8tOtS

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7. Myths About Differentiation

In this *Education Week* article, Illinois instructional coach Lisa Westman acknowledges that differentiation is challenging but says there are several myths that make it seem more difficult than it needs to be:

• *Myth #1: Differentiation means I have to plan something different for every student*. Not so, says Westman. Curriculum standards can be a springboard for relevant, skills-based learning experiences that take into account the class's interests and learning levels. Pre-assessments are helpful for grouping students, and ongoing checks for understanding can help fine-tune lessons as a unit progresses.

• *Myth #2: Differentiation means grouping students by reading ability and giving them texts at their level*. This may seem like differentiation, says Westman, but it's really tracking. "Leveled texts don't necessarily address the specific needs of students, which are often unrelated to reading ability," she says. "All students deserve access to challenging and interesting material. Differentiation comes into play with how students interact with text… The same text can be used by most students by compacting the curriculum for high-achievers and

scaffolding for students who need more support… Differentiate the process (task) and product (how learning is demonstrated) for students."

• *Myth #3: It's possible to differentiate using one data point*. Impossible, says Westman. Teachers need to use a variety of ongoing, high-quality assessments to take into account students' cognitive and affective needs.

• *Myth #4: One way to differentiate is giving high-achieving students more work and low-achieving students less*. "Differentiation is not more or less," says Westman. "Think quality over quantity. It is quite possible that one high-level question is more challenging than twenty low-level questions."

• *Myth #5: Differentiation is too hard!* "Don't beat yourself up," says Westman. "You are not alone." Work with an instructional coach or a colleague. Join a book study group and try something together. Use social media to build a professional learning network.

"Yes, Differentiation Is Hard. So, Let's Get It Right" by Lisa Westman in *Education Week*, August 11, 2016, http://bit.ly/2b9znaf

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8. Research on Effective K-12 Math Practices

In this Institute of Education Sciences paper, Bethany Rittle-Johnson (University of Delaware) and Nancy Jordan (Vanderbilt University) summarize 28 conclusions from IES-funded mathematics studies from 2002-2013:

Whole numbers, operations, and word problem-solving in elementary school:

- Measures emphasizing number, number relations, and number operations reliably identify students who are at risk for math difficulties or disabilities.
- Early number competencies are malleable and can be taught successfully to students with and without math difficulties through targeted and conceptually driven instruction.
- Incorporating activities with number lines reveals and supports students' knowledge of whole numbers.
- Working memory capacity and computational fluency predict word problem-solving accuracy in the early grades.
- Training in how to use learning strategies improves word problem-solving skills in at-risk learners, although response to training may vary according to a student's working memory capacity.
- Dynamic assessments involving teacher-student interaction may improve assessment accuracy and instruction for students at risk for math difficulties.
- In contrast to popular belief, manipulatives like building blocks and "play money" sometimes have limited value in teaching elementary math. Manipulatives and materials with minimal visual distractions can be more effective than ones that are more realistic or complex.
- Improving students' general reasoning skills may also improve their ability to learn math.

- Simple changes in the formatting of arithmetic problems can help improve students' understanding of the equal sign.
- A supplemental math curriculum that integrates the knowledge, skills, and teaching approaches used by Alaska Native people improves Alaskan students' math knowledge.

Fractions and algebra in the middle grades:

- A constellation of processes influences fraction learning, including numerical magnitude understanding, arithmetic fluency, attention, memory, and verbal skills.
- Students with and without math difficulties make greater gains when math instruction emphasizes fractions as magnitudes that can be represented on a number line.
- Adolescents with math difficulties benefit from fractions instruction that builds fractions skills and concepts alongside problems anchored in everyday contexts.
- Practice problems should be interleaved so that problems of different types are mixed together rather than grouped together by problem type.
- Comparing multiple ways to solve problems improves student learning, and teachers can help students make effective comparisons.
- Critiquing common incorrect solutions improves student learning.
- Promoting fluency in mapping between different representations of math ideas such as matching a word problem with an appropriate number sentence improves students' learning.
- Producing physical movements and gestures may improve students' math learning.
- Teaching students cognitive strategies for solving word problems, such as categorizing, supports their word problem-solving success more than typical classroom instruction.
- Using computer-based interim assessments provides teachers with diagnostic information and can improve students' math achievement.
- Computer-based tutoring systems can allow for individualized math instruction and have the potential to help students learn math. Systems ranging from a year-long integrated algebra I curriculum to an online assignment system improve students' math learning, although some tutoring systems for raising state test scores among low-income students have shown less promise.
- Using technology to support student collaboration may improve students' learning.
- Synthetic speech shows potential for making algebra more accessible for students with visual impairments.
- Increasing instructional time in algebra I for low-performing ninth-grade students can boost their course grades and test scores, but mandating algebra I by ninth grade may not improve test scores or college attendance.

Teacher professional development:

- Teacher professional development that helps elementary school teachers build on a previous Pre-K math intervention can boost the long-term effectiveness of the Pre-K intervention.

- Teacher professional development using a Lesson Study approach and targeting specific math content can improve teachers' knowledge and lead to improvement in students' learning of fractions.
- Teacher professional development that helps teachers create a supportive and safe environment for learning can improve the quality of third-grade math instruction, although it does not directly improve end-of-year state test scores.
- Insufficient support from principals and insufficient teacher knowledge are potential barriers to effective teacher professional development.

"Synthesis of IES-Funded Research on Mathematics: 2002-2013" by Bethany Rittle-Johnson and Nancy Jordan, Institute of Education Sciences, July 2016, http://ies.ed.gov/ncer/pubs/20162003/pdf/20162003.pdf

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9. When Are People Most Likely to Think About Leaving Their Jobs?

This *Harvard Business Review* "Idea Watch" article reports research on telltale signs that professionals are thinking about moving on. Perennial factors include not liking one's boss, not seeing opportunities for promotion or growth, or being offered a better job, perhaps for higher pay. But time-of-life issues also play a part. "We've learned that what really affects people is their sense of how they're doing compared with other people in their peer group, or with where they thought they would be at a certain point in life," says Brian Kropp of CEB Global. "We've learned to focus on moments that allow people to make these comparisons." Some examples:

- The anniversary of joining the organization or moving into one's current role (job-hunting activity jumps by 6 percent and 9 percent, respectively, at these points);
- Birthdays, especially mid-life milestones such as turning 40 or 50 (job hunting jumps 12 percent before birthdays);
- Large social gatherings of peers, such as class reunions (job hunting rises 16 percent after reunions).

"The big realization is that it's not just what happens at work," says Kropp, "it's what happens in someone's personal life that determines when he or she decides to look for a new job."

Some organizations try to anticipate losing effective employees and take preemptive steps like alerting them to internal job opportunities, but this may not work long-term "It's almost like when you're in a relationship and you've decided you want to break up, but your partner does something that makes you stick around a little longer," says Kropp. "Employees who accept a counteroffer are most likely going to quit at some point very soon."

"Why People Quit Their Jobs" in *Harvard Business Review*, September 2016 (Vol. 94, #9, p. 20-21), https://hbr.org/2016/09/why-people-quit-their-jobs

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10. The Downside of Having a Plan B

In this *Harvard Business Review* article, Alison Beard interviews Jihae Shin (Wisconsin School of Business) about her research showing that when people make a backup plan, they perform less well. Does that mean planning ahead about about what we'll do if we fail makes us less likely to succeed? Exactly, said Shin: "We think that when achieving a goal requires work, not luck, making a backup plan can hurt performance by reducing the desire for that goal."

But aren't we taught not to put all our eggs in one basket? We are, says Shin, and it's reassuring to think that if we fail, it won't be the end of the world. "However," she continues, "the costs of making backup plans haven't previously been examined, and we believe that acknowledging both costs and benefits can lead to better, more informed decision making."

So should we always act as if failure is not an option? "The punch line of this research could certainly be this," says Chin: "If you prepare for failure, you may be more likely to fail. But the practical advice we would give is more nuanced than that. We're not suggesting that you always avoid making backup plans. But maybe you could hold off on doing so until you've put as much effort as possible into your primary goal."

"Making a Backup Plan Undermines Performance" by Alison Beard in *Harvard Business Review*, September 2016 (Vol. 94, #9, p. 26-27),
https://hbr.org/2016/09/making-a-backup-plan-undermines-performance

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If you have feedback or suggestions,
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About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 45 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 64 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through more than a hundred articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the Memo to subscribers every Monday evening (with occasional breaks; there are 50 issues a year).

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Core list of publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educational Research Journal
American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
AMLE Magazine
ASCA School Counselor
ASCD SmartBrief
Center for Performance Assessment Newsletter
District Administration
Ed. Magazine
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Educational Horizons
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher
Go Teach
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Educational Review
Independent School
Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk (JESPAR)
Journal of Staff Development
Kappa Delta Pi Record
Knowledge Quest
Literacy Today
Middle School Journal
Peabody Journal of Education
Perspectives
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Responsive Classroom Newsletter
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
School Administrator
School Library Journal
Teacher
Teachers College Record
Teaching Children Mathematics
Teaching Exceptional Children/Exceptional Children
The Atlantic
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The District Management Journal
The Journal of the Learning Sciences
The Language Educator
The Learning Principal/Learning System/Tools for Schools
The New York Times
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Time Magazine
Wharton Leadership Digest